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ABSTRACT

As the Illinois public community college system approaches its 20th anniversary and in the face of a changing economy and shifting public priorities, the establishment of a systematic, collegewide program review and evaluation process that can improve the colleges' overall effectiveness and efficiency in relation to student, community, and state needs has become a necessity. Realizing that the primary usefulness of program review is at the individual college level and that no two colleges are alike, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) adopted a revised rule on Program Evaluation and Review, setting minimum standards of complieance and the following requirements: (1) the process established by each college must be systematic and collegewide; (2) all instructional, student, and academic support service programs must be reviewed; (3) the program evaluations must focus on the need for the program, the quality of the program, and the cost of the program; (4) every program must be reviewed at least every 5 years; and (5) each year the college must submit a list of programs to be reviewed and a summary report to the ICCB. At the state level, both the ICCB and the Illinois Board of Higher Education will be involved in the program review and evaluation processes. The ICCB will examine each college's program review schedule, report of review results, and review process. In the context of brief discussions, the report includes lists of indicators for assessing program need, costs, and quality, along with a sample program review and evaluation report format. (EJV)

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SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR ILLINOIS PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM FISCAL YEAR 1986 PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION

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March 1985

SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR ILLINOIS
PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
FISCAL YEAR 1986 PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION

As the Illinois public community college system approaches its Twentieth Anniversary, the years of enrollment growth appear to be coming to a close. During the system's infancy, the primary program emphasis was on the development of new programs and the expansion of existing programs and services to address the needs of a system growing rapidly both in numbers of colleges and in numbers of students and potential students.

In contrast, the system's entry into maturity is signaled by increasing stability. Few, if any, new colleges are likely to be founded, and system-wide enrollments are leveling off and changing character as declining numbers of recent high school graduates are being replaced by greater numbers of adults seeking to further their education. At the same time, the nature of the job market is changing from a worker-intensive industrial economy to an information-processing and service-oriented economy. The context in which community colleges must operate, thus, has shifted from spiraling growth in all areas to stability in size with a concomitant need to add and modify programs to serve new students and the labor market's rapidly changing technology.

In this new context, the college's program decisions and budget decisions become inextricably intertwined. The establishment of a systematic, college-wide program review and evaluation process can assist the college in establishing its programmatic priorities and allocating scarce resources to meet them. A systematic program review process can also:

-- Assure students and potential employers of the quality of the degrees and certificates awarded by the college;
-- Assure that the programs provided are relevant to the employment needs of the student, the community, and the state;
-- Assure district residents that the programs and services the college provides are effective and efficient;
-- Improve the quality of individual programs and services;
-- Improve the college's overall effectiveness and efficiency; and
-- Provide the information needed for institutional long-range planning and individual goal setting.

Realizing that the primary usefulness of program review is at the college level and that no two community colleges in Illinois are alike in size, organizational structure, geographic location, or programmatic mix, the Illinois Community College Board in March 1983 adopted a revised Rule on the Review and Evaluation of Programs. This revised Rule sets a minimum standard of compliance for all colleges. The revised Rule essentially requires the following five elements:

1. The process established by each college is to be <u>systematic</u> and <u>college-wide</u>. "Systematic" is defined as a definite scheme or method of procedure. Thus, a systematic program review and evaluation process is one conducted according to a predetermined pattern and timetable, with responsibilities for each piece of the whole also assigned.

"College-wide" means that there is an institutional policy and a process that governs program review in all units of the college. Key elements of a college-wide process are: a) to determine which programs will be evaluated each year and how the evaluations will be conducted, b) to analyze the results of the evaluations, c) to develop appropriate recommendations, and d) to take action to implement the recommendations of the program review. Both "systematic" and "college-wide" imply that the process is well documented and established as college policy or procedures.

2. The programs that are to be reviewed include all instructional and student and academic support service programs. The word "program" was chosen specifically because of its broader applicability. Instructional programs are commonly called curricula. It may not be useful, however, for the college to attempt to review each curriculum listed on its Curriculum Master File as a separate entity. In the baccalaureate/transfer area, for example, it may be more advantageous to review departments or divisions, while in the occupational area, it makes little sense to treat short-term certificate curricula separately if they culminate in associate degree curricula. Adult education, remedial education, and continuing education (both credit and non-credit) may be viewed more appropriately as "functions" if each is organizationally dispersed throughout the college. The various student services also might be viewed more appropriately as "functions" for the same reason. The college's organizational structure should help, thus, define "program."

3. The college needs to include within its review criteria program need, program quality, and program cost. In keeping with the notion of systematic and college-wide review, the college will need to select indicators of these three criteria that appropriately reflect each of the college's various programs.

4. Every program is to be reviewed at least every five years. This time period was selected because it coincides with the present Illinois State Board of Education's Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education review requirement for occupational programs and the Illinois Board of Higher Education review requirement for public universities. Shorter cycles are, of course, possible and may be necessary to accommodate external specialized accrediting and funding agencies.

5. Each August 1, the college is to submit to the Illinois Community College Board: a) a listing of the programs it intends to review during the coming year and b) a report summarizing the findings and the actions taken on each of the previous year's program reviews.

By stating the Rule as a minimum standard, the Illinois Community College Board permits each college the flexibility within these parameters to design a program review and evaluation process to serve the college's unique needs and situation, while at the same time achieving some consistency among colleges.

Suggested Indicators

While program review and evaluation should be designed to serve the needs of each college, the criteria used in the college's program review and evaluation process must include need, cost, and quality. There is usually no single standard of measurement (indicator) for these criteria. The data that are assembled and the analyses that are carried out to support decisions at the college level should be tailored to meet the college's needs and designed to help evaluate the defined objectives of a program. There are, however, certain indicators that generally are available and that would be appropriate for all colleges. The specific form of each may vary slightly among the diverse types of programs. These basic indicators are relevant for program review at the state level. It is important to review the criteria indicators using trend (historical, current, and projected) data. To review data for only one point in time can be very misleading. Likewise, reviewing trends for only one indicator at a time can produce invalid conclusions. Thus, for the review process to be effective, it should involve the interrelationships of various indicators over time.

Need

Need for a program can be reviewed from several aspects depending upon the type of program being reviewed. Evidence of program need by students is common to all programs. For some programs, however, student need for various components of a program rather than need for the program itself could be reviewed. For example, if student services are being reviewed as a program area, there is little doubt of the student need for the program as a whole. However, there may be various components of student services for which the student need differs dramatically.

Need for occupational programs should be reviewed for evidence of need by both students and potential employers. Once again, need for components of the program as well as the program as a whole can be reviewed. It may be determined through examination of the indicators that neither student nor employer demand indicates the certificate component of a particular program is needed but that need for the associate degree component is strong.

The table on the next page lists possible indicators of need for the program being evaluated. As the table suggests, some indicators may be more appropriate or more easily available for certain kinds of programs. Much of the data are available from each college's computerized data files, college reports, and the Illinois Community College Board MIS or other reports. Other information is available from other state agencies such as the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. It should be noted that the review should not be limited necessarily to these indicators.

Indicators of Program Need	Type of Program: Baccalaureate	Occupational	Other Instruc.**	Student Services	Academic Support Services
*Historic and projected full- and part-time annual program enrollment	X	X	X		
*Historic and projected number of program completers	X	X	X		
Historic and projected number of credit hours produced in program area	X	X	X		
Historic and projected employer demand for program completers		X	X		
Number of students and faculty using the service per month				X	X
Ratio of monthly usage to total enrollment/ faculty				X	X
Accessibility/timeliness of services				X	X

*Historic data are available, in part, from the ICCB MIS
**Includes remedial, ABE/ASE, General Studies, continuing education, and community education.

Cost

Cost is a very important criterion to consider in program review. No individual program or college can operate without considering the cost of various alternatives. Program costs should be reviewed with care. Some programs cost more than others. Often there are justifiable reasons for higher costs. Sometimes low costs may indicate inadequate equipment and resources and, thus, are not desirable. Therefore, although cost indicators are very essential in program review, a given dollar amount does not, by itself, serve as an indicator.

In attempting to identify the most basic cost indicators for a program, the costs which are unique to the given program are most useful. These types of cost tend to show how much extra the college is spending to offer the program.

The table below lists possible indicators of costs of the program being evaluated and the kinds of programs to which the indicators are applicable.

Indicators of Program Costs	Type of Program: Baccalaureate	Occupational	Other Instruc.**	Student Services	Academic Support Services
*Historic and projected annual unit cost per credit/contact hour	X	X	X	X	X
Historic annual cost per program completer	X	X	X		
Historic number of faculty/staff -- full- and part-time and FTE	X	X	X	X	X
Historic course section size (mean and range)	X	X	X		
Historic faculty/staff to student ratio (in FTE)	X	X	X	X	X
Historic and projected equipment costs	X	X	X	X	X
Historic and projected faculty/staff costs	X	X	X	X	X

*Historic data are available, in part, from the ICCB MIS
**Includes remedial, ABE/ASE, General Studies, continuing education, and community education.

Quality

Quality is perhaps the most important criteria in program review; however, it is often much more difficult to evaluate than need or cost because the indicators of quality are frequently less quantifiable than those of need and cost. To evaluate the quality of a particular program, the objectives of that program should be well defined and each indicator examined in light of those objectives. The table on the next page lists only a few of the suggested indicators of quality. As was the case with the possible indicators of need and cost, the list is not intended to be all inclusive. Quality indicators are commonly classified by type into the three categories of input, process, and outcome. It is essential that a program review include an appropriate balance of indicators of quality from each of these categories.

Indicators of Program Quality	Type of Program: Baccalaureate	Occupational	Other Instruc.**	Student Services	Academic Support Services
INPUT INDICATORS					
Faculty/staff qualifications and availability of additions/replacements	X	X	X	X	X
Program admissions/placement criteria	X	X	X		
PROCESS INDICATORS					
Student, peer, and supervisor ratings of teaching/service provided	X	X	X	X	X
Quantity, age, condition and appropriateness of equipment and materials	X	X	X	X	X
Quantity, condition, and appropriateness of facilities	X	X	X	X	X
Student rating of program (current and follow up)	X	X	X	X	X
Business/industry employer rating of program		X			
Results of specialized accreditation reviews		X			
Attrition/retention rates	X	X	X	X	
Appropriateness of course sequencing	X	X	X		
Course articulation	X	X	X		
Historic annual ratio of completers to FTE enrollment	X	X	X	X	

Indicators of Program Quality	Type of Program: Baccalaureate	Occupational	Other Instruc.**	Student Services	Academic Support Services
OUTCOME INDICATORS					
*Historic annual number of completers employed full- and part-time in related field		X	X		
*Annual salary of completers employed full-time in related field		X	X		
*Historic annual number of completers continuing their education	X	X	X		
Percentage of completers who pass licensing or GED exam, if applicable		X	X		

*Historic data are available, in part, from the ICCB MIS
**Includes remedial, ABE/ASE, General Studies, continuing education, and community education.

Review of Programs at the State Level

Both the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education will be involved in the program review and evaluation process at the state level. This section summarizes the process that occurs once the college's current program review schedule and the prior year's program review results are received at the Illinois Community College Board office on August 1 of each year.

Overview of ICCB Review of College's Program Review

The ICCB staff will review each college's program review process in the following three ways:

1. Review of each college's program review schedule for the current year and preceding years;

2. Review of each college's report of the prior year's program review results; and

3. Review of each college's program review process during the ICCB recognition visit (FY 1986-88 recognition cycle).

Review of the Program Review Schedule

The review of each college's program review schedule for the current year will include a check of the programs that were reviewed in prior years. The key items checked in this review are the following:

1. Is the college likely to meet the five-year cycle requirement?

2. Are all types (1.1, 1.2, etc.) and levels of instructional programs, as well as student and academic support programs, represented?

If the college modifies its review schedule during the year, it should notify the ICCB of such modifications.

Review of the Program Review Annual Report

A report of each college's prior year's program review results is required by the ICCB by August 1, following the end of the fiscal year. A suggested format for this report can be found in Appendix A. This report is reviewed by the ICCB staff using the following parameters:

1. A comparison with the prior year's list of programs to be reviewed or reported modifications to the schedule will be made to determine whether the college reviewed the programs it indicated it would. Any differences, such as whether the college added, subtracted, or substituted programs from its previous proposed schedule will be noted.

2. The college's report will be reviewed to determine if the College met the parameters of the ICCB Rule. The following questions will be asked in this process:

   -- Was the process "college-wide" and "systematic"? That is, was a review made beyond an individual unit self-study?
   -- Were indicators of program need, cost and quality used?
   -- Were criteria indicators reasonably consistent from program to program?

3. Decisions made on the program review will be examined to determine:

   -- How many programs will be:
      a. continued without modifications;
      b. modified (consolidated, merged, expanded, reduced);
      c. scheduled for further review during the next year;
      d. phased out/withdrawn?
   -- Were programs slated for withdrawal, consolidation, or expansion so indicated on the RAMP/CC Table 4.1

4. The quality of the decisions made in the college's review process will be reviewed by examining the following criteria:

   -- Were the appropriate criteria indicators used?
   -- Did the college attempt to meet the intent of the Rule (even though it may not have succeeded)?
   -- Did the results of the review justify the recommendations/actions?

Following this review of the summary report, a letter will be written to each college identifying any problems or concerns. The college may be asked to supply further information if the college's report does not contain sufficient information to evaluate adequately the review based on the above questions.

The ICCB staff will then prepare a statewide report on the program review process that has been completed in the community college system during the prior year. This report will be presented to the ICCB and transmitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Although the exact nature of each year's report may vary, the report will address the following:

1. An introduction summarizing the ICCB Rule on program review and its intent;

2. A listing of programs reviewed by each college during the year and decisions made by the colleges on these programs; and

3. An analysis of the colleges' program review processes and results with possible recommendations for future action to the colleges and/or the ICCB (including any Rules changes deemed necessary).

In addition to this general review of the college's summary reports, the ICCB staff, in cooperation with the Board of Higher Education staff, will select certain curricular areas for intensive state-level review each year. The Board of Higher Education has a statutory responsibility to "...review periodically all existing programs of instruction, research and public service at the state universities and colleges and to advise the appropriate board of control if the contribution of each program is not educationally and economically justified." To discharge this responsibility the IBHE will rely on using the ICCB program review mechanism and this intensive state-level review. The areas for intensive review will be selected on the basis of statewide data on such factors as enrollment trends, employment demand, and placement rates as well as on special issues that may be of concern at the state level. The colleges' summary reports for the selected areas will be analyzed in light of these factors, and specific programs may be compared to statewide data for similar program areas. This analysis will rely heavily on available ICCB/MIS data about a particular program and about similar programs throughout the state. These data include enrollments, completions, unit cost, and follow-up study results. In some cases, the Board of Higher Education staff and the Illinois Community College Board staff may request additional information from colleges to support their review conclusions. Any requests for such information will be transmitted to the colleges by November 15 of each year. Responses to any staff inquiries concerning selected programs should be submitted by January 15.

Based on this special analysis, the IBHE staff will prepare an annual report of staff conclusions and recommendations. A draft of this report will be shared with the ICCB staff in March. The ICCB staff will have an opportunity to comment on the report. A revised report and recommendations will be submitted to the IBHE in May. The report will present the results of the community colleges' program reviews and the staff's conclusions resulting from the special analysis. Recommendations will identify those programs (if any) that in the judgment of the IBHE staff are not educationally or economically justified. The IBHE will notify the district Board through the ICCB of these

programs and will recommend that the district Board take appropriate action. Although the IBHE recommendations are not mandatory, the district Board must report to the ICCB on any subsequent actions taken by the college.

ICCB Recognition Review

The ICCB staff will review each college's program evaluation process in conjunction with the college's recognition visit. The current ICCB recognition visit schedule is based on a three-year cycle with each college scheduled for a visit every third year. During the FY 1986-88 visit cycle the ICCB staff will review the college's program review and evaluation process to determine if it is in compliance with ICCB Rules by focusing on the following key items:

-- Does the college have on file a copy of the process documentation and individual program reviews?
-- Did the college submit to ICCB a list of programs to be reviewed and a report of program reviews by August 1 of each year?
-- Is the program evaluation process "college-wide"?
-- Is the program evaluation process "systematic"?
-- Were indicators of program quality, need, and cost used? Were criteria indicators reasonably consistent from program to program? Were the indicators appropriate?
-- Were results of program review used in the college's decision-making process?
-- How many program changes, additions, or deletions resulted from the program review process? Were they appropriate? Were plans for improvement carried out?

The ICCB staff will use the following resources in the recognition process: the college's process description and instrumentation, individualized program reviews, program review schedule listings and program review reports to ICCB, data submission schedules, and MIS and other ICCB reports.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION REPORT FORMAT

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SAMPLE PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION REPORT FORMAT

I. Overview of year's review and evaluation process (How the year's review fits into the college's five-year review cycle, as well as a brief description of the college-wide, systematic process)

II. Summaries of individual program reviews (One summary for each program/unit reviewed): Each summary should contain the following:

   A. Name of program area (with CIP code(s), if appropriate). If the program title includes several curricula, list all curricula included.

   B. Need information

      1. Indicators used
      2. Results and conclusions

   C. Cost information

      1. Indicators used
      2. Results and conclusions

   D. Quality information

      1. Indicators used
      2. Results and conclusions

   E. Recommendations based on results and conclusions

   F. Actions taken or to be taken with timelines for each action

III. Summary of college-wide annual review results/actions

IV. List of programs to be reviewed during the current fiscal year

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